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the  
POLITICS  
of the  
IMPURE



IFE is basically simple. It may grow more and more complex, but it need not lose this simplicity. Complexity needs to be perfected, simplicity is man's perfect state." Said Piet Mondrian, expressing the belief system that informed the then new world order, that of twentieth-century Modernism. This belief was informed by the vision of technology as a tool of reduction, purifying nature from a state of randomness into one of cleanness, controllability and perfection. Not just the art of Modernism was all about purity and the search for abstraction, also in rationalized agriculture, refined food, urban planning, population control, the experience of the Other, the same logic and politics of purity was at work, both as the goal and the legitimization of the means to reach that goal. With amazing, world changing consequences, but also with devastating effects for the environment, climate, cultural diversity, biopolitics, city and country life.



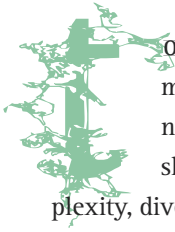
T is crucial to understand that our progression through the twentieth century towards our contemporary global Crystal Palace (Sloterdijk) of purity and transparency has been constantly accompanied by an almost physical desire for the pure, not just Mondrian's crystalline structures, but also the addictive taste of white sugar and white bread. Within the framework of V2\_'s Life & Art series that we started a year ago we want to investigate this urge for the pure, but also advocate a much deeper need for the impure, not to reinstate a new organicism, the nth back-to-nature movement, but trace that progression to a point where all Modernist values reverse, where technology becomes an agent for the impure and the imperfect. As technology has been an agent for homogeneity and cleanness it now turns into one for heterogeneity and global contingency.



MINERAL and synthetic fertilizers raise crops to ten times the level you get using mixed media such as cattle dung and rotten plants. Before the invention of synthetic fertilizers only one billion max could be fed. Today, there are over six billion people living on Earth simply because there is enough food for them, although obviously it's not equally distributed. Monocultures are basically clones of a single purified individual plant, growing on dead earth full of pesticides and fungicides, producing food in a place where it's not needed, so a distribution system is required of vans and airplanes, so at the end of the day the amount of energy needed to produce, distribute, process and sell the food is many times bigger than the amount of energy that's stored in the food: purity in production accounts for a large amount of non-reusable waste. Our question here will be: How can we reverse the trajectory of agricultural technologies and make them catalysts of diversity and variation?



MODERNIST city plans were designed for homogenous populations, which was kept healthy with a functional, both hygienic and esthetically cleansed environment. Today these are neighborhoods with 45 nationalities at the local school, including three or more world religions, dozens of congregations and sects and other forms of irrational behavior. The border between town and country was breeched so many times that the end result might be described as either "the region city" where "everything is countryside, everybody lives on the land." Impure agriculture, that is biological or "organic" agriculture grows groups of different species and varieties on earth that consists for up to 95 percent of living organisms. Our question here will be: How can we invent an urbanism of aggregation without resorting to Post-Modern strategies of simply visual pluriformity?



ODAY, in art as in biological agriculture, slow food, city development, demographics, evolutionary theory and what not, we see a new form of art, a new form of technology, and a new world view slowly but surely taking shape that is based on and explores complexity, diversity, variation, interaction, thanks to the computer and the way its networks reorganize our world. That is: based on the power of the impure. Our question here will be: How can we develop an aesthetics of the impure that goes beyond the contemporary atomization, i.e. individualization of styles?



HAT we want to explore in this book is this creative potential of the impure. How does the impure work, how does it connect or transform? The impure works bottom up, non-linear, non-hierarchically, producing emergent properties while tending towards equilibrium as a result of immense complexity. The ideals of simplicity and perfection have to be finally overcome and left behind. The logic and art of the impure needs to become a politics of the impure.